

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMCONSUL BELIZE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4403

AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MEXICO

US MISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 0081

US CINCSO 0002

C O N F I D E N T I A L BELIZE 0671

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR PFOR GT BH

SUBJECT: GOVERNOR'S VIEWS ON BELIZE RESOLUTION IN UNGA

1. GOVERNOR POSNETT CALLED ME IN OCT 11 TO ASK ABOUT MY IMPRESSION OF US OFFICIAL ATTITUDES IN WASHINGTON AND GUATEMALA.

2. H.E. OPENED BY OBSERVING THAT THERE SEEMED TO BE TWO COMMENTS PREVAILING AT UNGA, ONE FLOWING FROM DESIRE TO PROPITIATE GUATEMALANS WITH A MODERATE OR EVEN AN INNOCUOUS RESOLUTION, THE OTHER REFLECTING THE BELIEF THAT A STERN WARNING WAS WHAT WAS ACTUALLY NEEDED TO AVERT A GUATEMALAN MILITARY ADVENTURE. I NOTED THAT THE LATTER NEED, IF IT COULD BE SO DESCRIBED, HAD BEEN DEALT WITH BY APPROPRIATE US OFFICIALS IN GUATEMALA, WASHINGTON AND NEW YORK(HE HAD SEEN A REPORT ON AMBASSADOR MELOY'S CONVERSATION WITH PRESIDENT LAUGERUD WHICH HE SAID HAD "RATHER AWED" HIM) THAT THAT MY OWN READING OF WASHINGTON'S THINKING WAS THAT, ALTHOUGH WE WERE PREPARED TO TAKE AS TOUGH A LINE AS NECESSARY WITH THE GOG PRIVATELY, WE WOULD VIEW ANY RESOLUTION WHICH THE GUATEMALANS MIGHT REASONABLY CONSIDER HUMILIATING AS UNLIKELY TO FURTHER THE COURSE OF BELIZEAN INDEPENDENCE AND, MOREOVER, THAT

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THE ULTIMATE EFFECT OF SUCH A RESOLUTION MIGHT WELL BE TO PROVOKE

PRECISELY THE SORT OF IRRATIONAL ACT WHICH ITS PROPONENTS CLAIMED THEY WERE SEEKING TO AVERT.

3. ON THE SUBJECT OF ASSAD SHOMAN, GOB'S MAN IN NEW YORK, AND WHETHER HE WERE SUFFICIENTLY AWARE OF THE DANGER OF BECOMING A PATSY FOR HIS NONALIGNED FRIENDS, H.E. THOUGHT THE UK DELEGATION WAS KEEPING HIM ADEQUATELY CHAPERONED BUT CONFESSED DOUBT AS TO WHETHER HE WAS QUALIFIED TO COPE WITH VARIOUS ASPECTS OF THE SITUATION NOW DEVELOPING AT UN, GIVEN HIS YOUTH AND INEXPERIENCE. GOVERNOR VOLUNTEERED THAT TIME WAS ABOUT RIPE FOR MINISTER ROGERS AND AMBASSADOR COURTENAY TO JOIN SHOMAN IN NEW YORK. HE SAID BOTH THE LATTER WERE OLD PROS AND WERE SUFFICIENTLY PRAGMATIC TO RECOGNIZE NEED FOR RESOLUTION THAT WOULD NOT IRREVOCABLY ALIENATE GUATEMALANS.

4. ON PREMIER PRICE'S ROLE IN THE CURRENT SITUATION, THE GOVERNOR THREW UP HIS HANDS. THE PREMIER, HE SAID WAS UP IN THE CLOUDS DEALING WITH THE CONCEPT OF BELIZEAN INDEPENDENCE IN QUASI THEOLOGICAL TERMS. HE WAS, SAID THE GOVERNOR, OUT OF HIS ELEMENT IN UN POLITICS AND HENCE WAS ILL-EQUIPPED TO MANAGE THE TACTICAL AND SEMANTIC JOCKEYING THAT NOW LAY AHEAD. HE THOUGHT, HOWEVER, WITH HIS OWN AS WELL AS COURTENAY'S AND ROGERS' ADVICE TO GUIDE HIM, PRICE WOULD NOT BE A PROBLEM. AS FOR HIS PREVIOUS REFUSAL TO COMMIT GOB TO A RESUMPTION OF TALKS AFTER UNGA, H.E. SAID PRICE HAD YIELDED ON THIS POINT SOME TIME AGO.

5. TURNING TO MILITARY SITUATION, GOVERNOR SAID DUE NOTE WAS BEING TAKEN OF US ADVICE AGAINST REENFORCING BRITISH GARRISON HERE AT A TIME WHEN UNGA WOULD HAVE BELIZE RESOLUTION UNDER CONSIDERATION. WISDOM OF THIS IN POLITICAL TERMS WAS OBVIOUS ENOUGH, HE SAID; TROUBLE WAS THAT DELAY DIFFICULT TO JUSTIFY MILITARILY. SINCE ANY GUATEMALAN MOVE WOULD BE MOST LIKELY TO FOLLOW IMMEDIATELY AFTER ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION UNACCEPTABLE TO GUATEMALA IT ONLY MADE SENSE MILITARILY TO HAVE REENFORCEMENTS IN PLACE BY THEN. MY IMPRESSION WAS THAT NO DECISION ON THIS HAD BEEN REACHED.

6. H.E. ALSO ACKNOWLEDGED SUGGESTION THAT MINERVA PATROL COAST NEAR PUNTA GORDA BUT SAID HE HAD RECOMMENDED AGAINST THIS SINCE MILITARY VALUE QUESTIONABLE - ESPECIALLY IF GUATEMALAN MOVE INTO SOUTHERN BELIZE WERE OVERLAND - AND SINCE IT MIGHT BE RECONFIDENTIAL

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GUARDED BY THE GUATEMALANS AS BLATANTLY PROVOCATIVE. THE MINERVA WILL BE IN THE AREA, HE SAID, BUT OVER THE HORIZON.

7. COMMENT. GOVERNOR'S OPTIMISM (IF THAT IS WHAT IT WAS) CONCERNING POSSIBILITY THAT COURTENAY, ROGERS AND SHOMAN WILL EVENTUALLY PROVE AMENABLE TO A COMPROMISE RESOLUTION WHICH CAN THEN BE SOLD TO PRICE LOOKS A BIT PREMATURE. NATURE OF SUCH A COMPROMISE STILL DIFFICULT TO IMAGINE; HMG, ACCORDING TO

GOVERNOR, STILL SEES SELF-DETERMINATION AS CENTRAL THEME OF BELIZE
RESOLUTION, AND I WONDER WHETHER EITHER BRITISH OR BELIZEANS ARE
PREPARED TO ACCEPT QUALIFYING VERBIAGE GOG SEEMS CERTAIN TO
INSIST ON.
GAWF

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